

# THE PMDP


---

## ROADMAP

**The Project Management Development Process has been a great boost for my professional development. Having gone through the program—and having received recognition for advancing through all four levels of it—I've had opportunities that wouldn't have been available to me otherwise.**

**—Rex Geveden, Deputy Director, Marshall Space Flight Center**





NASA'S COMPLEX AND HIGHLY TECHNICAL MISSIONS rely on effective project teams and managers. Since 1993, through its Project Management Development Process (PMDP), the Academy of Program and Project Leadership (APPL) has offered direction to the Agency's project practitioners as they advance in their careers.

PMDP helps identify and sequence professional experiences, courses, and other project-based learning experiences that support individual career goals and center activities by outlining competencies at four levels of development. The result is that PMDP provides NASA project practitioners with a road map to the knowledge and competencies appropriate for their job—and the jobs to which they aspire.

Plus, new this year, APPL has rolled out its electronic Project Management Development Process (ePMDP) tool, a learning management system that includes a dynamic presentation of the PMDP levels, competency areas, competency organizational structures, Individual Development Plans (IDP), and online PMDP enrollment.

*APPL's website, [www.appl.nasa.gov](http://www.appl.nasa.gov), provides access to ePMDP, as well as other online resources for NASA practitioners enrolled in the Project Management Development Process.*

#### ● PMDP LEVEL I: TEAM MEMBER

At Level I, the project team member demonstrates an awareness and understanding of NASA's project management (PM) tools, techniques, and lexicon. A Level I project practitioner is an active, contributing

member of a team—often a functional expert, business manager, systems engineer, scientist, or project control agent. Level I portfolios are validated by a practitioner's immediate supervisor.

*Required training: APPL's Foundations of Project Management class (or equivalency). Information about APPL classes, including schedules, is available in the Career Development section of the APPL website, [www.appl.nasa.gov](http://www.appl.nasa.gov).*

#### ● PMDP LEVEL II: SUBSYSTEM LEAD

Practitioners at this level have at least two years of project team experience (including two years as a subsystems lead) and must demonstrate the application of PM tools, techniques, and lexicon at the project subsystem level, including utilization of PM best practices. Level II portfolios are validated by the Center Peer Group and PMDP panel.

*Required training: APPL's Project Management and Systems Management classes (or equivalency).*



#### Developing NASA leadership

I'm certified at Level I of PMDP, and I'm in the process of finishing up my certification for Level II. Though my title doesn't read "project manager," I have come to realize that everything I do requires some sort of project management skills.

Over the past couple of years, I have worked with the Integration Engineering Section for the International Space Station. Right now, Space Station is reorganizing,



and I'm going to help out over on the operations side. We have limited resources, but high technical demands. Efficient project management is what ties those two together—and certainly the findings of the *CAIB Report* bear this out. As an Agency, we can't afford to base our decisions on a limited viewpoint (cost and schedule) when there are critical technical requirements that have to be met.

It's important now that we use the *CAIB Report* to try to see what we need to do to become better as an agency—and I think that the PMDP process supports this effort. Effective project management is key to getting us where we need to go.

—Bill Stinson, *Kennedy Space Center*

### ● PMDP LEVEL III: PROJECT MANAGER

Level III project managers must have at least eight years of project team experience and five years of successful project management—in addition to demonstrating the integration of PM tools, techniques, and best practices across subsystems at the project level. Level III portfolios are validated by the Center Peer Group and PMDP panel.

*Required training: APPL's Advanced Project Management class (or equivalency).*



#### Expanding horizons

I started out in operations on the Shuttle Program and for more than ten years I was a systems engineer on the floor. I went from a greenhorn apprentice

working for a senior systems engineer to be a lead systems engineer with people working for me.

At some point, I set a goal of becoming a project manager—and I knew there was a lot I needed to learn. So, I went and sought opportunities that would expand my exposure to project leadership.

PMDP was part of that process for me. I received my Level III PMDP designation last year. In addition to what I've gained through the curriculum and hands-on experience, I've benefited from all of the people that I've met through the process. Over the years that network has become invaluable to me.

Not everyone wants to become a project manager, but I think that having project management experience is

an essential part of doing any agency job. Projects are at the heart of all of NASA's work. I encourage everyone in my division to be at least Level-II certified, because it gives them a formal way of looking at and understanding project work by understanding how to deal with schedules, logistics, people, and all the rest.

—Hector Delgado, *Kennedy Space Center*

### ● LEVEL IV: PROGRAM MANAGER

Leaders with responsibility for a large agency-wide program must demonstrate strategic vision of PM principles, tools, techniques, and best practices. Level IV managers must exhibit the ability to manage a complex program or set of intricate projects with multiple associated interfaces, performing appropriate trades across projects and providing reviews and recommendations to projects—including cost, schedule, and technical performance management. Program managers' PMDP portfolios are validated by the Center Peer Group, PMDP Panel and an agency-wide panel.

*Required training: APPL's Program Management and International Project Management classes.*



#### The path ahead

I feature my Level IV PMDP certification prominently in my resume and job applications. I think my promotion to my current position and the one before this were directly influenced by my Level-IV PMDP certification. The leadership here certainly mentioned it frequently.

The best part of PMDP is that a career development path is laid out for you. To some people it may look like you're merely "checking off" a list of requirements. In reality, as you go through the process, it turns out to be a strong enhancement to your career development. That's because it is put together by people who understand what it takes to move through the different levels of program and project management. So, if you take the pains to go through it, I really think you emerge from that process being highly suited to provide effective program and project management.

—Rex Geveden, *Marshall Space Flight Center*